

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2 and 4 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 3 is cancelled and claims 1 and 4 are amended. Support for the amendments to claims 1 and 4 can be found, for example, in original claims 1, 3 and 4. No new matter is added. In view of the foregoing amendments and following comments, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that claim 3 contains allowable subject matter.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102

The Office Action rejects claims 1 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,427,997 to Oshima et al. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

By this Amendment, claim 1 is amended to incorporate the features of claim 3, which the Office Action indicates is allowable. Accordingly, claim 1 is allowable. Claim 4 depends from claim 1 and, thus, also is allowable.

For the foregoing reasons, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103

A. **Oshima or Hayashi**

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 2 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,427,997 to Oshima et al. or EP 1 179 753 to Hayashi et al. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

By this Amendment, claim 1 is amended to incorporate the features of claim 3, which the Office Action indicates is allowable. Accordingly, claim 1 is allowable. Claims 2 and 4 depend from claim 1 and, thus, also are allowable.

For the foregoing reasons, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

B. Onishi in view of Oshima

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 2 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 6,413,687 to Onishi et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,427,997 to Oshima et al.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

By this Amendment, claim 1 is amended to incorporate the features of claim 3, which the Office Action indicates is allowable. Accordingly, claim 1 is allowable. Claims 2 and 4 depend from claim 1 and, thus, also are allowable.

For the foregoing reasons, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1, 2 and 4 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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